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General and complete disarmament

Relationship between disarmament and development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/52. It discusses recent trends in the further strengthening within the United Nations of the relationship between disarmament and development. In addition, the report contains information received from Governments on the subject.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/52 entitled "Relationship between disarmament and development". In paragraph 1 of the resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to strengthen the role of the Organization in the field of the disarmament-development relationship, in particular the high-level Steering Group on Disarmament and Development, in order to ensure continued and effective coordination and close cooperation between the relevant United Nations departments, agencies and sub-agencies. In paragraph 2 of the resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to take action, through appropriate organs and within available resources, for the implementation of the action programme adopted at the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.[1] In paragraph 7 of the resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report at its sixty-fourth session on the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

2. Furthermore, in paragraph 6 of the resolution, the General Assembly reiterated its invitation to Member States to provide information regarding measures and efforts to devote part of the resources made available by the implementation of disarmament and arms limitation agreements to economic and social development, with a view to reducing the ever-widening gap between developed and developing countries. This information is contained in section III below.

II. Strengthening further the role of the United Nations in the disarmament-development relationship

3. In recent years, the United Nations has increasingly focused on issues pertaining to the relationship between disarmament and development. Examples include the broad approach to the issue of small arms which the Secretary-General presented to the Security Council last year (S/2008/258), the emphasis on a comprehensive approach in mine action (see e.g. resolution 62/307), and the support the United Nations is giving to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, adopted in Dublin on 30 May 2008 (see resolution 63/71).

4. Member States themselves are also giving increased attention to the relationship between disarmament and development within the United Nations framework. Earlier this year, they embarked on discussions on a possible Arms Trade Treaty (on the basis of resolution 63/240). Issues pertaining to development were frequently raised during the two sessions in 2009 of the Open-ended Working Group established to discuss this possible new instrument. Four more sessions of the Open-ended Working Group are planned in the coming two years.

5. For countries in the midst of conflict as well as States in a post-conflict phase and nations otherwise nominally "at peace", the destabilizing influence of links between armed violence, poor control over the trade in arms and ammunition, the traffic in illicit drugs, weak institutions, corruption and the lack of good governance is increasingly recognized. The United Nations needs to develop comprehensive answers to those combined challenges and has been doing just that. An important

[1] United Nations Publication, Sales No. E.87.IX.8.

example would be the new generation of multidimensional United Nations peacekeeping operations that have emerged, deployed as part of a broader international effort to assist countries making the transition from conflict to sustainable peace. Current disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts within such operations focus on creating a secure and stable environment in which the process of recovery and peacebuilding can begin. Typically, in close coordination with the peacekeeping operation, other United Nations agencies support the critical reintegration process, which aims to provide demobilized former combatants with sustainable livelihoods.

6. The Security Council held an open debate on collective security and armament regulation on 19 November 2008, which centred in part on Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations carrying the important objective of the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources. The presidential statement issued after the debate significantly stressed the Council's concern at increasing global military expenditure (S/PRST/2008/43). It urges all States to devote as many resources as possible to economic and social development, in particular in the fight against poverty and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

7. Since 1981, Member States have been providing information on their military spending through the Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures. Under this instrument, Governments are called upon to annually report to the Secretary-General their military expenditures for the latest fiscal year for which data are available. The United Nations collects this information and makes it public. Thus far, more than 120 States have reported to the instrument at least once. Significantly, for the first time since the instrument's inception, the General Assembly has moved to establish a group of governmental experts, on the basis of equitable geographical representation, to review the operation and further development of the instrument in 2010-2011 (resolution 62/13).

8. Another example of the increased attention to the relationship between disarmament and development within the United Nations is the resolution the General Assembly adopted entitled "Promoting development through the reduction and prevention of armed violence" (resolution 63/23). This resolution stresses the need for a coherent and integrated approach to the prevention of armed violence, with a view to achieving sustainable peace and development. It makes reference to the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development of 7 June 2006 (A/63/494, annex I) , which aims at framing the scope and dimension of the problem of armed violence, developing effective projects and monitoring progress. As the Secretary-General has stated, developing measurable goals on armed violence towards 2015 will offer the opportunity to integrate security-related themes into the possible follow-up of the Millennium Development Goals (S/2008/258).

9. The above initiatives and processes illustrate the growing significance of the relationship between disarmament and development for the United Nations and its Member States. In particular, since the adoption of the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), in which world leaders recognized that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, the importance of this link has become widely accepted. The main existing mechanisms for coordination on these issues within the United Nations are the Mine Action Team, the Coordinating Action on Small Arms Mechanism and the Inter-Agency

Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, which aim to ensure that the relationship between disarmament and development is covered in their respective areas through involvement of all relevant actors from within the United Nations system.

10. The above developments and processes illustrate the lasting commitment of the United Nations — in accordance with the action programme of the final document of the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development — to promote an interrelated perspective on disarmament and development within the overall objective of promoting international peace and security.

III. Information received from Governments

11. Pursuant to the request in paragraph 6 of resolution 63/52 to the Secretary-General, a note verbale dated 10 April 2009 was sent to Member States seeking their views (see para. 2 of this report). To date, Cuba, Lebanon, Panama, the Philippines and Qatar have submitted information to the Secretariat. Any further replies received will be issued as an addendum to the present report.

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[7 July 2009]

The United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 63/52, invited all Member States to continue providing the Secretary-General with information regarding measures and efforts to devote part of the resources made available by the implementation of disarmament and arms limitation agreements to economic and social development, with a view to reducing the ever-widening gap between developed and developing countries. In reply to this invitation, the Government of the Republic of Cuba has the following considerations to communicate.

The global character of the deep economic, social, food, energy and environmental crisis affecting us means that the relationship between general and complete disarmament and development is becoming increasingly relevant by the day. That in this international situation global military expenditures should continue to climb while the problems due to economic and social underdevelopment, poverty and squalor deteriorate is disastrous.

Thirty years ago, in 1979, the leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, warned about the dire consequences that would be reaped when more than 300 billion dollars were being spent on arms at a time when the underdeveloped countries had an external debt of a similar amount. Nothing has been done, of course, and since then the situation has grown dramatically worse.

While economies, especially in developing countries, were being bled dry, global military expenditure increased by 4 per cent in 2008 over 2007 and is now 1.46 billion dollars. This harmful trend has persisted since the beginning of this century, and over the past 10 years expenditure on arms has increased by 45 per cent in the world as a whole.

Far from decreasing, budgets for military activities are increasing at absurd rates. In contrast, reductions of budgets for social, educational or health programmes would appear to be in vogue. The number of unemployed in the world could rise to 230 million in 2009; and in 2008, in just one year, the hungry of the world increased from 854 million to 963 million.

The proposal which Cuba made some years ago regarding the establishment of a fund to meet the pressing economic and social development requirements of needy countries has become much more important; the fund would be managed by the United Nations and would be financed by resources equal to at least half of current military expenditure. This action, in terms of value added, could be considered a confidence-boosting factor and would be a crucial measure for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. According to United Nations estimates, the spending of 80 billion dollars a year for a decade would suffice to conquer poverty and hunger and remedy the lack of health services, education and housing throughout the world.

Cuba again reiterates its firm support for the action programme adopted at the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, held in September 1987, which included the international commitment to allocate a portion of the resources released through disarmament for purposes of socio-economic development. It also renews its endorsement of the discussion of this matter in the General Assembly and the implementation of the recommendations in the relevant resolutions of the Assembly.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]
[6 July 2009]

In response to your letter regarding the aforementioned subject, the Ministry of Defence wishes to affirm that:

Lebanon has consistently supported international instruments on disarmament in general, and on weapons of mass destruction in particular because they pose a threat to international peace and security. Expenditure on such weapons absorbs resources that could instead be allocated to development in its various forms.

Lebanon is affected by armed violence, and needs every available form of assistance and support to alleviate the problem. Nonetheless, Lebanon strives to foster economic and social development by every available means, despite its difficult military and security situation, and despite the intensive operations being carried out by the Lebanese Army, both within the country and on its borders, in implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006).

This subject is of concern to some other Ministries and you may wish to solicit their opinions.

Panama

[Original: Spanish]
[7 July 2009]

In special situations, countries make financial investments to cover military costs; this causes environmental damage and economic loss, detracting from national development. The United Nations, looking to establish a balance between the two situations, relies on the implementation of resolutions as a regulatory measure. In this regard, Panama is conscientious about implementing United Nations proposals, the goals established in the Millennium Declaration, and the provisions of various treaties, including the Treaty of Tlatelolco, relating to nuclear-weapon-free zones, as well as the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials, among others. Our Constitution states that Panama cannot have an army and the Government may, with the permission of the executive branch, possess arms. This provision reaffirms our neutrality and our duty to maintain unimpeded transit along the Panama Canal, ensuring security for the entire international community. To this end, we have established regulations through laws and import restrictions on arms.

Philippines

[Original: English]
[25 June 2009]

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) of the Philippines initiated the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Programs (4Ps) — an innovative poverty reduction strategy that provides grants to extremely poor households to improve their health, nutrition and education, particularly of children aged 0-14, provided they comply with the program's conditionalities. 4Ps provides social assistance through cash provision to the poor to alleviate their needs and addresses the intergenerational poverty cycle through human capital investment.

DSWD is also currently implementing the joint project with the World Food Programme, "*Emergency Operations Philippines-Assistance to Conflict-Affected Mindanao*". This program supports the peace process by addressing the food security needs of the vulnerable in conflict-affected areas, as well as promoting education, health, and social development. Furthermore, the *"Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive Integrated Delivery of Social Services"* (KALAHI-CIDSS) is the Philippine Government's flagship poverty alleviation project which aims to empower communities and enhance their participation in local governance and community projects that reduce poverty.

Moreover, DSWD implemented a program for rebel returnees in support of disarmament and arms limitation in 1987 to 1992 called the *Social Integration program (SIP) for Former Rebels*. The DSWD sits as a member of the National Committee on Social Integration -- the program's policymaking body. The SIP, which is the Philippine version of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, is being implemented by the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP). It is also the succession program of the National Reconciliation and

Development Program. In addition to this, under the SIP, former rebels receive the following:

1. Compensation for surrendered firearms, courtesy of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Philippine National Police and the Department of National Defence;

2. Immediate cash assistance courtesy of OPAPP; and

3. Socio-economic and psychosocial assistance.

Where viable, the Self-Employment Assistance Kaunlaran and other basic social services are provided to former rebels in coordination with local social workers. The DSWD is the designated lead agency for the healing and reconciliation component of the SIP.

Lastly, in the case of the Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa sa Mindanao (RPMM) in Northern Mindanao, the KALAHI-CIDSS projects in certain areas of Lanao Norte benefited the communities of former RPMM rebels.

Qatar

[Original: Arabic]
[20 May 2009]

The State of Qatar enjoys a high level of stability and security, has good relations with all its neighbours, is not involved in regional conflicts and has acceded to all treaties banning weapons of mass destruction. Qatar possesses only conventional weapons, and only such as are necessary for its security given the prevailing conditions in the region. Arms expenditures represent only a small fraction of the national budget. The State focuses its efforts on various aspects of social advancement, including health, education and culture, for all citizens and development projects for the sake of future generations. Development and infrastructure projects of all kinds also receive a great amount of care and attention.